

(Washington, DC) Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) released the following statement on a potential shutdown of the federal government, which will occur if the current appropriations expire at midnight on April 8, 2011:

"A government shutdown would be detrimental to America's interests and security. All Americans rely on the federal government and its employees to care for our nation's veterans and administer important services such as those offered by the Social Security Administration, Department of Education, and Department of Health and Human Services.

"Federal workers are consumers just like every other American and taking money out of their pockets harms consumer demand at a time when our economy needs it most. This shutdown will make it difficult for these dedicated workers to pay their everyday expenses. A shutdown poses a direct threat to America's economic recovery.

"It is completely mind-boggling that Republicans are willing to put the well-being of the nation at risk rather than put forward a clean Continuing Resolution with no ideological riders in order to keep the federal government operating while negotiations on long-term spending continue. This perpetuates their 'my-way-or-the-highway' attitude and is a reckless way to operate. This is not the time to force controversial policies into an emergency spending measure.

"There are people struggling to make it in this difficult economy. They are trying to keep their jobs, keep their homes, keep their families together, and keep their children in school. It is time to put partisan politics aside, get a deal on the table that will not shutdown the government, and do what is right for this nation."

If a federal government shutdown occurs, the government would stop all non-essential services. Essential services, including the armed forces, air traffic controllers, police, fire departments, and workers, who provide medical care, will continue to operate. The Postal Service and Federal Reserve will also continue to operate since they are self-funded. Expect for national parks, museums, and monuments across the nation to be closed. There may be a delay in the processing of tax refunds, passports, and bankruptcy cases. Social Security checks should continue to be mailed but new claims may not be processed during a shutdown. VA hospitals will remain open but benefits may be reduced. Unemployment programs may be affected depending on the length of a shutdown, if the federal funds for these programs run out. Most

non-essential government employees will be furloughed and will not receive pay. Federal contractors will not be paid and will not be eligible for back pay, and most agencies will cease processing grant applications and other contracting services.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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